

Hamilton Field, Base Street Signs
East of Nave Drive
Novato
Marin County
California

HABS No. CA-2398-DC

HABS
CAL
21-NOVA,
IDC-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HAMILTON FIELD Base Street Signs

HABS No. CA-2398-DC

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Location: Hamilton Army Air Field
Novato, Marin County, California
Base Street Signs (various locations)

U.S.G.S.: Novato, CA. Quadrangle (7.5' series), 1954 (revised 1980)
Petaluma Point, CA. Quadrangle (7.5' series), 1959 (revised 1980)
UTM Coordinates: Zone 10; A: 542100/4213620; B: 544720/4212220;
C: 542760/4210650; D: 541040/4212600

Significance:

The base street signs are considered significant for their association with Air Force history in northern California, and with World War II actions in the Pacific Theater. The directional sign posts installed at Hamilton between 1935 and 1946 have both functional and aesthetic attributes, and are contributing structures to the Hamilton Army Air Field.

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) for a comprehensive Statement of Significance and individual report HABS No. CA-2398-A for a condensed Statement of Significance.

Description:

Directional street signs are installed throughout the base to identify buildings and various areas within the post. The earliest type of sign posts have either two metal posts with a connecting rail to support a large board sign or a single post with a small suspended sign. Both sizes have decorative Spanish-style wrought iron brackets compatible with other decorative metal features of the base architecture. A later type of sign post also prevalent on the base is a simple F-shaped device composed of welded pipe rail sections. These Moderne-style sign posts were installed during the 1940s.

The original street signs consist of a three-inch-diameter steel post with an octagonal decorative metal cap. The decorative Spanish-style brackets are constructed of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch by $\frac{1}{4}$ inch iron with tapered ends. Iron clips hold the various pieces of the bracket together. (Later replacement signs are welded at junction points.) The brackets support a suspended $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch-thick iron sign with a cut decorative edge. The metal letters are raised off the surface of the sign.

Historical Context:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) and Section B in report HABS No. CA-2398-F.

The street signs reflect the attention to detail Nurse gave the posts. Even the most functional items project the Spanish Eclectic theme of the base.

Sources:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) and Section B in report HABS No. CA-2398-F.

Project Information:

Hamilton Army Air Field is owned by various federal entities including the Department of the Navy, Department of the Army, United States Coast Guard, and General Services Administration (GSA). The Army/GSA parcels are being excessed and sold to private developers. The Navy property is included in Base Closure and Realignment actions.

As part of the Army's undertaking, it has been determined in consultation with the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) that the excess sale will have an affect on properties at the air field, and that these properties are components of a district that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Based on consultation with the OHP and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, pursuant to 36 CFR part 800, regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f), a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was entered into by the interested parties in March 1994. The agreement stipulated that prior to excess sale the Army must contact the HABS/HAER division at the Western Regional Office of the National Park Service, San Francisco, California, to determine the appropriate level and kind of recordation for the subject properties. The MOA further stipulated that copies of the documentation be made available to the OHP and appropriate local archives designated by the OHP. This recordation has been prepared in order to meet those stipulations.

Text prepared by: Mary L. Maniery/Judith Marvin

Title: Historian/Architectural Historian

Affiliation: PAR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, INC., Sacramento, California

Date prepared: July 1995

Photography prepared by: David De Vries

Affiliation: Mesa Technical, Berkeley, California

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